



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



*[The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.]*

---

DEAR EDITOR: To assume or to argue that men as a rule surpass in general adaptability and competency the women in the avocation of nursing is a position which the writer does not take, feeling, as he does, that such a statement would be radical and self-assertive, and one which has not or cannot be corroborated by observation and experience.

The motive which has prompted the writing of this article is not one of antagonism to the propriety of women nursing, but rather to set forth in as clear a light as possible some cases or instances where the skilled training of the hand and the brain of the man nurse is advantageously felt and realized. It is true, I verily believe, that the special fitness and qualifications of a woman over a man in the nursing of all ills and diseases to which the human family is heir are greatly superior, and especially is this true in surgical cases.

One principal reason why the woman nurse is held in preference over the man is because of the elements of sympathy and compassion which is a part of her human nature, and which does not naturally enter into and prove a controlling feature in the action of men in general.

The gentleness and tenderness of a woman shown in the handling of cases affected with nervous troubles, where the peevishness of the nature asserts itself in a remarkable degree, renders the service of a woman especially desirable with this class of patients.

In cases of paralysis, insanity, urinary troubles, and in most all instances where the patient is suffering dire physical extremity, which practically resolve themselves into sheer exhaustion or helplessness, I am firmly of the opinion that the man nurse can work to better advantage and obtain better general results in the outcome of the cases than the woman. I am quite sure the experience of nursing in hospital and home will sustain this statement.

The principal reasons, as I have observed them, which warrant this assertion are, first, the greater physical strength of the man nurse to combat and overcome the physical obstinacy in some cases, and in others the utter helplessness wrought as results of these diseases; second, because men are more generally affected with the above enumerated troubles, and as men they much prefer a nurse of their own sex for private reasons. To such cases men render to men better and more satisfactory service.

The question is frequently asked, Why are there not more good men nurses if they are naturally or can by a course of training be duly qualified to nurse the troubles of human kind? If the persons who make this inquiry would inform themselves of the fact that there are in the United States, so far as the writer knows, just two places where a man can receive training,—viz., Bellevue Hospital in New York City and Grace Hospital at Detroit, Mich.,—they would not or could not wonder at the fact of there being so comparatively few men who have acquired a marked degree of proficiency in this avocation of life. If there were at least

one such school in each of the large cities or commercial centres which dot our land, there would be infinitely more young men who would take up the work of properly fitting themselves for nursing, and thus relieve the women of a great many disagreeable cases which in all probability they would gladly and willingly surrender. There is no good reason why there should be an unfriendly rivalry or contention between men and women in the nursing line, because each can, if the proper spirit be shown, be friendly, agreeable, and helpful to the other. To exclude either from this grand, good field of labor would be a personal imposition, injustice, and injury to those who have aspirations in this direction.

As I said at the outset, women as a rule are better adapted to nursing in the broadest and highest sense of the term, but this does not by any means argue the men out of the question of entering this field of study and action.

The writer spent nearly a year of his life in army hospitals during the late war in Jacksonville, Fla., Savannah, Ga., and Havana, Cuba, and six months in the two leading hospitals of Chicago. He knew nearly a hundred nurses while there and saw them about their work, and observed nothing which would indicate or reflect discredit upon the profession, or which would disgrace or shock the modesty of a lady, whether she be the sister or wife of the physician or officer in charge, and he can see no good reason why a young man should not want a sister to act in the capacity of a nurse in an army hospital as well as a private one.

The conclusion of the whole matter is, as I see it, that there is certainly a place in the profession of nursing for men, and that in some cases, the ones which I have mentioned and perhaps others yet undiscovered, the services of a man nurse would prove preëminently helpful and advantageous.

JOHN FREDERICK.

PAXTON, ILL.

---

DEAR EDITOR: Dr. Stone's article in the July number of the JOURNAL surely provides for nurses abundant food for thought. With some ideas advanced by him we must be in sympathy, while with others we can but strongly disagree. It is true that for the past few years there has arisen periodically a cry for cheaper service in nursing. This cry has come always from the medical profession, and when one recollects the praise given to intelligent, well-trained nurses, and by the same men who now demand cheaper work, we can but wonder why the change of opinion has arisen. The intelligent, well-trained woman is and has always been, and she will continue to be, the most valuable aid to the profession which now makes loud demands for a cheaper article, and one wonders if excellent work is less desirable now than when first training-schools sent out nurses to the public. Be that as it may, the demand for cheaper service has become so general that schools have been organized to train inferior women in a much shorter time than is required for the educating of superior women, and those women not sufficiently well educated to enter the training-schools must have schools especially organized for them to be instructed in the few things which are deemed necessary to enable them to successfully care for the sick. If the question of expense is the only one to be considered, why would it not be far more satisfactory to employ the hourly nurse, who is as good in every way as she who remains the entire time with the patient, this giving the sick person excellent care for the little time necessary, and have a maid to do the work which properly belongs to a maid? Would it not be better for the patient

to have the proper care for a short space of time than to have very indifferent care continually? To a nurse this would seem the better way. It is true that when the movement of training attendants first started some graduate nurses were for a time connected with it. But they soon left it. Nurses of to-day are striving to advance, and the attendant movement is not considered by them a movement in the right direction. Dr. Stone suggests that small hospitals be made schools for attendants, and he also says of these small hospitals, "There are many points where, in the care of patients, the small institution offers advantages that are not to be found in the more complex machinery of a great hospital." This we know to be very true, and it is largely because of the excellent nursing given patients in the small hospitals that that is the case. Then, will the trustees of these small hospitals, who are justly proud of the high standard of their hospitals, be willing to lower the standard to enable them to train a class of women who when trained will be neither nurses nor anything else? We trust not. Many of these small hospitals are establishing excellent post-graduate courses, thus providing the best of nursing for their patients and giving added knowledge to graduates, some of whom go to them from our large and progressive schools. There are small hospitals with training-schools, and I am quite sure, should the curriculum of such a school be compared with that of the large school, the small school would not as a rule be the one to suffer by the comparison. Is it true that applicants for admission to the small schools are discarded applicants of the large schools? Not as a rule. Many parents who strongly object to their daughters entering large training-schools are quite willing to allow them to enter the smaller schools, and one will find intelligent, educated, refined young women in the small schools as well as in the large. The small schools have many advantages over the large. In the small schools, where no medical students are to be found, the nurse is the assistant to the visiting physician, where her sister of the large school stands by an interested looker-on, and as practice makes perfect, in such cases the nurse in the small school has the advantage. Let us not forget that some of our most able statesmen, and also some of our greatest leaders, have been graduates of small colleges, and to-day we can, if we look for them, find among our most able women in the nursing profession not a few who have graduated from small training-schools. So let us not pull down the small schools, but rather make them better each year, and if training-schools for attendants must be created, let it not be at such a cost as the destruction of the training-schools of the small hospitals.

SUPERINTENDENT OF A LARGE TRAINING-SCHOOL.

[We are inclined to believe that the true solution of this problem is an economic one. At present there are not enough nurses, and they are badly distributed. When the supply is greater than the demand,—now it is the reverse,—young nurses, like the young doctors, will have to work among the people of moderate means. A professional fee based upon skill and ability will take the place of the established scale of wages now paid to all nurses without regard to knowledge or experience.—Ed.]

---

[LETTERS to the Editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—Ed.]